

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A strap path access guide for a strapping machine of the type having a feed assembly and a chute, the strapping machine including a strapping head disposed between the feed assembly and the chute, the strapping machine configured to receive first and second courses of associated strap material, position, tension and seal the strap material around a load, the feed assembly including a pair of tensioning wheels and a pair of feed wheels disposed along a strap path, the feed wheels feeding the strap material into and around the chute and the tensioning wheels retracting the strap material and tensioning the strap material around the load, the strap path access guide comprising:

a fixed lower guide portion extending between the tensioning wheels and the strapping head, the fixed lower guide portion defining a lower surface of the strap path;

a pivotable upper guide portion, the upper guide portion pivotable about a pivot point that is spaced from and rearwardly beyond the tensioning wheels, the upper guide portion pivotable between a closed position in which the upper and lower guide portions cooperate with one another to define the strap path and an open position in which the strap path is fully accessible, the upper guide portion being pivotable in a plane transverse to a direction of travel of strap material through the strap path; and

a latching element for securing the upper guide portion in the closed position.

2. The strap path access guide in accordance with claim 1 including a latch for securing the upper guide portion in the closed position.

3. The strap path access guide in accordance with claim 2 including a biasing element for biasing the latch to a latched position.

4. The strap path access guide in accordance with claim 1 wherein the upper guide portion is configured for carrying one of the feed wheels.

5. The strap path access guide in accordance with claim 4 wherein the one of the feed wheels is an idler wheel.

6. The strap path access guide in accordance with claim 5 wherein the idler wheel is mounted to biased assembly for biasing the idler wheel toward the lower guide portion.

7. The strap path access guide in accordance with claim 1 wherein the lower guide portion includes an opening in the lower portion of the strap path, the opening configured for receiving one of the feed wheels.

8. A feed assembly for a strapping machine of the type having a chute, and a strapping head disposed between the feed assembly and the chute, the strapping machine configured to receive first and second courses of associated strap material, position, tension and seal the strap material around a load, the feed assembly comprising:

a pair of tensioning wheels and a pair of feed wheels disposed along a strap path, the feed wheels feeding the strap material into and around the chute and the tensioning wheels retracting the strap material and tensioning the strap material around the load, a strap path access guide defining a portion of a strap path, the strap path access guide having a fixed lower guide portion extending between the tensioning wheels and the strapping head, the fixed lower guide portion defining a lower surface of the strap path, the strap path access guide including a pivotable upper guide portion pivotable about a pivot that is spaced from and rearwardly beyond the tensioning wheels, the upper guide portion pivotable between a closed position in which the upper and lower guide portions cooperate with one another to define the strap path and an open position in which the strap path is fully accessible, the upper guide portion being pivotable in a plane transverse to a direction of travel of strap material through the strap path and a latching element for securing the upper guide portion in the closed position.

9. The feed assembly in accordance with claim 8 including a latch for securing the upper guide portion in the closed position.

10. The feed assembly in accordance with claim 8 including a biasing element for biasing the latch to a latched position.

11. The feed assembly in accordance with claim 8 wherein the upper guide portion is configured for carrying one of the feed wheels.

12. The feed assembly in accordance with claim 11 wherein the one of the feed wheels is an idler wheel.

13. The feed assembly in accordance with claim 12 wherein the idler wheel is mounted to biased assembly for biasing the idler wheel toward the lower guide portion.

14. The feed assembly in accordance with claim 8 wherein the lower guide portion includes an opening in the lower portion of the strap path, the opening configured for receiving one of the feed wheels.

15. A strapping machine of the type configured to receive first and second courses of associated strap material, position, tension and seal the strap material around a load, comprising:

a feed assembly;

a chute; and

a strapping head disposed between the feed assembly and the chute;

an infeed arrangement; and

a strap supply for supplying strap material to the feed assembly through the infeed arrangement,

the feed assembly including a pair of tensioning wheels and a pair of feed wheels disposed along a strap path, the feed wheels feeding the strap material into and around the chute and the tensioning wheels retracting the strap material and tensioning the strap material around the load, the feed assembly including a strap path access guide having a fixed lower guide portion extending between the tensioning wheels and the strapping head, the fixed lower guide portion defining a lower surface of the strap path, a pivotable upper guide portion, the upper guide portion pivotable about a pivot that is spaced from and rearwardly beyond the tensioning wheels, the upper guide portion pivotable between a closed position in which the upper and lower guide portions cooperate with one another to define the strap path and an open

position in which the strap path is fully accessible, the upper guide portion being pivotable in a plane transverse to a direction of travel of strap material through the strap path and a latching element for securing the upper guide portion in the closed position.

16. The strapping machine in accordance with claim 15 including a latch for securing the upper guide portion in the closed position.

17. The strapping machine in accordance with claim 16 including a biasing element for biasing the latch to a latched position.

18. The strapping machine in accordance with claim 15 wherein the upper guide portion is configured for carrying one of the feed wheels.

19. The strapping machine in accordance with claim 15 wherein the one of the feed wheels is an idler wheel.

20. The strapping machine in accordance with claim 19 wherein the idler wheel is mounted to biased assembly for biasing the idler wheel toward the lower guide portion.

21. The strapping machine in accordance with claim 15 wherein the lower guide portion includes an opening in the lower portion of the strap path, the opening configured for receiving one of the feed wheels.